United Nations A/C.1/58/PV.22

General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

First Committee
22nd meeting
Wednesday, 5 November 2003, 2.30 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Sareva ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 2.45 p.m.

Agenda items 62 to 80 (*continued*)

Action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: The Committee will continue today to take decisions on remaining draft resolutions. We will take action on draft resolutions A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1 and A/C.1/58/L.26/Rev.1 and on A/C.1/58/L.61. At the request of the sponsors, consideration of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.1/Rev.1 has been postponed until tomorrow.

Before the Committee proceeds to take action on the draft resolutions in cluster VII, "Disarmament machinery", I shall give the floor to those representatives wishing to make general statements other than explanations of vote or to introduce revised draft resolutions.

Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand): Thailand supports the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1 and is pleased to join in sponsoring it, because we feel that it will contribute to the broader effort to revitalize the General Assembly. We hope, however, that whatever the outcome of this exercise in the First Committee, it will also take into account the general direction taken by the General Assembly, as well as the pertinent conclusions and recommendations that may emerge from the recently appointed High-Level Panel on Global Security Threats, under the chairmanship of Mr. Anand Panyarachun, former Prime Minister of Thailand. Thailand would thus like to be included in the list of sponsors of the draft resolution.

Mr. Trezza (Italy): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein align themselves with this statement.

Let me start by saying that we fully endorse draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1, entitled "Improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee", which has been sponsored by all EU member States and acceding countries. Indeed, we are committed to increasing the effectiveness of the working methods of the First Committee. This is not a task which can be settled once and for all. Rather, we need to keep the work of the First Committee constantly under review in order to rationalize it and to keep abreast of the security challenges that need to be addressed.

In that regard, Sir, I would like to recall the efforts undertaken in 1993 by one of your predecessors as Chairman of the First Committee, the representative of Germany, who presented proposals for the rationalization of the work of this body and submitted a

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

03-59713 (E)

draft resolution which was adopted by consensus as resolution 48/87. That resolution should remain a point of reference for the task ahead of us. We are committed to maintaining the relevance of the First Committee and enhancing its effectiveness. We advocate an inclusive and focused approach which takes account of all the security concerns of its members.

We were encouraged by the presence of the President of the General Assembly during our deliberations, as well as by the active participation of delegations in the informal debate which you, Sir, wisely convened on this issue. Many new ideas were raised during those discussions and several written contributions were circulated. We welcomed them all as tangible support for our work, and we commend you, Mr. Chairman, for having initiated this debate.

The EU believes that the working methods of the First Committee can be improved for the benefit of all members, and is convinced of the need to maintain a balanced agenda which reflects important goals and objectives. The First Committee should also be able to react to and focus upon today's immediate security problems. At the same time, it is essential that all delegations in the First Committee should be able to express their main concerns in the fields of disarmament, non-proliferation and security in general and to submit draft resolutions reflecting those concerns.

On this basis, the EU is ready to continue to discuss and deliberate the issue of the rationalization of the work of the First Committee and to convey to the Secretary-General its views on the issue of improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee.

Mr. Emmanuel (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): As I am taking the floor for the first time in the First Committee, my delegation is pleased, Sir, to offer you its warm congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee, whose work you are guiding with great skill and acumen. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

With regard to the issue of revitalizing the methods of work of the First Committee, my delegation would like to pay tribute to the initiative of the delegation of the United States of America and to thank all those delegations that introduced specific proposals designed to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the Committee.

As for draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1, my delegation had no objection to the issue of the enhancement of the working methods of the First Committee being discussed in informal consultation. My delegation would like, however, to stress that it supports the position outlined earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement to the effect that the issue of enhancing the effectiveness of the First Committee cannot be dealt with in isolation or taken out of the overall context of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

My delegation is delighted to see that its concerns have been taken into consideration by the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1. We shall therefore not oppose adoption of that draft resolution. However, we continue to believe that the slow pace of nuclear disarmament cannot be attributed to the methods of the First Committee. Nor can the seven-year stalemate of the Disarmament Commission and the impossibility of implementing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons be blamed on the working methods of the First Committee.

In the final analysis, improving the effectiveness of the First Committee also means, above all, respecting existing procedures while refraining from overburdening it with questions that are not on its agenda and which are moreover entrusted to ad hoc bodies of the General Assembly.

Mr. Umer (Pakistan): I am making this general statement in regard to items under cluster VII, relating to the disarmament machinery. The special focus of my intervention is draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1, entitled "Improving the effectiveness of the methods of the work of the First Committee".

We strongly believe in the improvement of the functioning of this Committee — or of any other organ of the United Nations. I have personally been involved in the reform of the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations for many years, which gives rise to my conviction that serious efforts are required, indeed, to make the intergovernmental machinery more effective and more efficient. It is in that context that we look at the draft resolution contained in

A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1. In that very context, we are prepared to look at it with a positive frame of mind.

However, there are a number of issues which cannot escape the scrutiny of an objective observer. The title of the draft resolution says "Improving the effectiveness of the methods of work". We have absolutely no problem with that. We would be very happy if the methods of work of the First Committee could be improved. But then, when we look at the first preambular paragraph, which talks about existing and new threats to international peace and security, we have some difficulty in putting the two together, because when you are talking about improving the effectiveness of methods of work, you are talking about procedures, basically: how to improve the procedural efficiency of this Committee — better allocation of time perhaps; better allocation of the agenda items. We have absolutely no problem with that. But we cannot fully understand why this is linked to existing threats to international peace and security. Perhaps the original sponsor of this draft resolution might wish to shed some light on that.

And then, what are the threats to international peace and security? I think we need to have a serious discussion on it. As far as we are concerned — and I believe as many members of the Non-Aligned Movement are concerned — the most serious threat to international peace and security is the continued existence of vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons. I would like to ask the sponsor of this draft resolution how an improvement in the methodology of work of this Committee would result in the reduction of nuclear weapons. I think everyone in this Committee would be most interested in getting an answer to that question.

I come from Geneva. We have seen there for many years now a total reluctance — an absolute rejection — even of the talk of reducing nuclear weapons; even of the talk of nuclear disarmament: total rejection. And yet we have this draft resolution which talks about threats to international peace and security.

The other threat to international peace and security — and our assessment, again, is subject to correction — is the phenomenon of vertical proliferation. New and highly deadly weapons are being designed for deployment and use — openly stated. So, we would like to know how the improvement of the methodology of the work of this Committee is going to help us in respect of this new and deadlier form of nuclear weapons.

The third most devastating threat that we face today is the phenomenon of occupation. I would like to know whether there is anyone sitting here who believes that the occupation of foreign lands does not constitute the most devastating threat to international peace and security. And yet we find no mention of foreign occupation in this revolutionary draft resolution.

And then, another grave threat to international peace and security is the growing, corroding and debilitating concept of unilateralism. I am sure everyone here agrees that we are acting in the First Committee within the parameters of the Charter of the United Nations. And when one country or two countries or a number of countries choose to work outside the Charter of the United Nations, that poses a serious threat to international peace and security. Yet we do not find any mention of that in this draft resolution.

Finally, there is this insidious concept of pre-emptive military action — a concept totally alien to the purposes and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter allows the use of force under only one condition: Article 51, which is self-defence. And yet, in recent years we have seen this deadly concept of pre-emptive military action becoming the norm of the day. And still we are told we need to reform the First Committee of the General Assembly.

We are also slightly perplexed by the fact that we are talking about new and existing threats. We would like to address those threats within the precepts, the purposes and the principles of the United Nations Charter. There is no mention of the Charter. In the whole draft resolution, the Charter does not exist. So, we hope the protagonists of reform of the First Committee are not thinking in terms of going beyond the Charter of the United Nations, because that would be a grave disservice to this Organization.

Finally, paragraph 1 requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report which will compile and organize the views of Member States. We have no problem with that. What we find most mysterious is that yesterday we submitted a draft resolution on confidence-building measures, which was, I think, opposed by everyone listed here. The substance of that draft resolution was to ask the Secretary-General to get the views of Member States on how to generate

confidence-building measures. We were told that this was too intrusive and that the Secretary-General has no business doing that. And yet, in this draft resolution, the Secretary-General is being asked to do exactly the same thing. In my limited understanding of the English language, this would be called a double standard. But then, perhaps this is the world in which we are required to live.

We hope, as I said earlier, that this initiative will lead to a change in the thinking that prevails in this Committee and that its adoption will be followed by implementation. The basic problem, the fundamental problem, that we face in this Committee is not time allocation or methodology; the problem we face is that, the moment we adopt these resolutions, nobody cares about them. We talk about nuclear disarmament, regional disarmament and conventional disarmament, but which of these resolutions are implemented? People would have accepted the earnestness of the intentions of this draft resolution's sponsor, had that delegation mentioned that the effectiveness of the First Committee can be considerably increased if we start implementing these resolutions. That does not happen.

Regardless of all of this, we believe in cooperation. We will not ask for a vote on this draft resolution, despite its flaws, which I have pointed out. We hope that, when member States give their views, and we will give our views along the lines that I have indicated, when we meet next year, it will be possible to launch a serious and an honest effort. This effort should not just be the former, not just an optical illusion, but an honest effort to enhance the efficiency and the effectiveness of this Committee.

Mr. Moungara-Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Chairman, this being the first time my delegation has spoken in the course of our work, I would like to say how very much we appreciate the way in which — and the skill with which — you and your associates in the Bureau are guiding our debates.

I have chosen to speak at this juncture to give my delegation's view on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1, on improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee. My delegation expresses appreciation to the sponsors of this draft resolution, which is directly in line with the work of reforming the General Assembly. Indeed, the heavy responsibility entrusted to our Committee of considering issues of disarmament and international security requires that the Committee be more effective in its working methods.

We would also hope that the exercise upon which we are about to embark, that of improving our working methods, will contribute to improving, if not to advancing, the general process of disarmament.

The Chairman: No other delegations wish to make general statements at this juncture. We will therefore now proceed to take action on the draft resolution and draft decision under cluster 7. Before doing so, I shall call on delegations wishing to speak in explanation of vote or position before action is taken.

Mr. Varma (India): Allow me also, Mr. Chairman, to take this opportunity this afternoon to convey our deep appreciation of the manner in which you have been steering the work of this Committee, as we approach the harbour, so to speak. The anchorage has been put off by a day, but this only gives is us the pleasure of continuing our association with you. We would like to commend you for your efforts.

We have taken the floor this afternoon to set forth our views on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1, and we would like to state the following. We commend the principal sponsor of this draft resolution, the delegation of the United States, for bringing an important text before this Committee. We also note with appreciation the constructive approach that that delegation adopted in conducting wide-ranging consultations during the drafting stage. We see this in light of the common objective of the collective strengthening of multilateralism, an objective we all share.

We look forward to addressing the core issue of the reform of our Committee — essentially, its working methods. We will actively work towards the objectives of this draft resolution. We will support draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1, and we urge all delegations to join in this creditable endeavour. We believe that this draft resolution provides a platform for discussion: a discussion that is much needed; a platform that we are about to bring into being.

Let us not hang all our problems, difficulties and frustrations on the belief that there is one magical solution to the problems that we face. This draft resolution provides, as we said, a platform for furthering our work. We also believe that, in doing so, the First Committee will be able to make an important

contribution to the larger question of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

Mr. Umer (Pakistan): I gave a general statement a while ago and I would now like to explain my position, which will obviously be to go along with the so-called consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1.

A while ago, we heard a reference to the strengthening of multilateralism. We are very encouraged by that reference. The question is, how can multilateralism be strengthened? The high priests of multilateralism might wish to enlighten us, but I would like to believe that multilateralism will be strengthened if we begin to implement the decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Is there any way of strengthening multilateralism other than accepting, respecting and implementing the decisions of the Security Council? So, what we see here is an attempt to play games. Why do these champions of multilateralism not implement the decisions of multilateralism? It is very easy to state that this draft resolution will strengthen multilateralism. But how will it strengthen multilateralism unless and until the individual who spoke before me, in particular, tells us right now, in the presence of the Committee, that his country is prepared to implement the decisions of multilateralism. That will not happen. There is a basic hypocrisy that is at work on this particular question.

And then, we are told that there is no magic solution. Of course there is no magic solution. We have to work hard; we have to work incrementally; we have to work over time to achieve the results that we desire. But there are certain things that are totally inimical, hostile and antagonistic to the very essence of multilateralism. The first of these things is the forcible occupation of foreign lands by brutal occupation: brutal use of force. If these countries that talk about multilateralism started implementing the spirit of multilateralism, maybe ours might become a better world to live in.

So what I am trying to say is that we have no problem with this draft resolution and we will work with the sponsor of the draft resolution next year to ensure that the Charter is respected. We will not accept any attempt to subvert the Charter, make no mistake about it. We have a lot at stake, each one of us, in upholding the integrity of the Charter of the United Nations, and it will remain so. Within these parameters, if the sponsors are prepared to work with us in a spirit of respect for the United Nations Charter and its purposes and principles, we will work with them. But we will not allow these little games to be played, in which we are told about the strengthening of multilateralism while these very countries are the ones who have subverted every single decision of the United Nations and the Security Council.

Having said that, my delegation would be very happy to go along with the consensus on this draft resolution and would be prepared to work with the sponsors next year. We will give our views on this draft resolution and we hope that these views will be taken into account, in an honest, sincere and earnest effort to make this Committee a true platform for preserving international peace and security.

The Chairman: We have heard the last statement in explanation of position.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1. I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will proceed to take a decision on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1, entitled "Improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee". This draft resolution was introduced by the representative of the United States at the 14th meeting, on 23 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1 and also in documents A/C.1/58/INF/2 and Add.1, Add.4, Add.5 and Add.6. In addition, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Afghanistan, Thailand, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Monaco.

The Chairman: The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft decision A/C.1/58/L.61.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to take a decision on the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/58/L.61, entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". This draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement at the 21st meeting, on 4 November 2003.

The Chairman: The sponsors of the draft decision have expressed the wish that the draft decision be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft decision A/C.1/58/L.16 was adopted.

The Chairman: I now call on those delegations wishing to make an explanation of position on the decisions just taken.

Mr. Gala López (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to explain its position on the adoption without a vote of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1.

In the view of Cuba, it is imperative to carry out real, effective reform and an in-depth process of democratizing the United Nations that would guarantee the ability of the Organization to preserve peace and to spearhead the struggle for general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, to which humankind aspires. Reforming and revitalizing the General Assembly must be a single and integrated process. The open-ended consultations chaired by the current President of the General Assembly are the setting in which major decisions must be considered to guarantee more effective and efficient work by all the Main Committees of the General Assembly, including the First Committee.

In our opinion, the chief author of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1 is trying to force us to embark upon an independent path to reform for the First Committee. Curiously — and regrettably — that same delegation does not show the same readiness or interest in exchanging views or engaging in dialogue on items of greater relevance in the realm of disarmament, including the matter of convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

One cannot be sure that this Committee needs greater changes in its working methods than the other Main Committees do. This is why we do not understand or share the particular interest shown in establishing a singular, separate process in the case of the First Committee.

Moreover, the request included in this draft resolution to include a new agenda item would appear to contradict calls for the so-called streamlining of the General Assembly's agenda. That concern grows stronger still in the light of the fact that, starting now, other Main Committees may feel themselves encouraged likewise to add separate items to their agenda related to enhancing the efficiency of their respective working methods.

We also do not find relevant, in this text, the linkage that it would seek to establish between enhancing the efficacy of the working methods of this Committee and the date on which a criminal and terrorist act was committed, an act condemned by all Member States.

The efforts to revitalize the main Committees must be in synchrony with the general guidelines established at the plenary level through a process of extensive consultations among Member States. The recommendations to improve the working methods of the main Committees, including the possibility of rationalizing their respective programmes of work, must represent the outcome of broad-ranging consultations and consensus.

We cannot fool ourselves. The effectiveness of the work of the main Committees, including this one, will depend more on the political will of the member States than on any changes in their working methods, which should in no case have an adverse impact on the mandates and priorities previously set at special sessions of the General Assembly and at United Nations conferences and summits. No rationalization of the structures or functions of the main Committees could compensate for the lack of political will of certain powerful States or for their preference for unilateralism.

Finally, my delegation reiterates that the reform and strengthening process should endow the United Nations with the capacity fully to implement the Millennium Declaration with respect to the proscription of weapons of mass destruction and, in particular, nuclear weapons in order to reduce the role

played by such weapons in security doctrines and policies, curb their qualitative improvement and deployment, and prevent the development of new, highly lethal conventional weapons and the use of outer space for non-peaceful purposes.

Mr. Duarte (Brazil): As this will probably be the last time my delegation addresses the Committee at this session, let me briefly thank you, Sir, for the excellent way in which you have taken the helm and brought this ship to good harbour.

Allow me to explain the reasons why Brazil decided to go along with the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1. We appreciate the effort of the initiators of the draft resolution to incorporate other delegations' suggestions, including some of those that we ourselves presented to them. Brazil fully shares the grave concern expressed by the international community at threats to international peace and security that have emerged in recent times. We should not, however, lose sight of the persistence of very serious threats that have been present for a long time. New and existing threats alike should be addressed with determination by the First Committee.

Initiatives aimed at improving the effectiveness of the First Committee — including those that have been referred to as housekeeping measures — should not, in our view, be considered outside the broader discussions of the overall reform of the United Nations and revitalization of the General Assembly. The views expressed by the Secretary-General and by the heads of State and Government during the general debate of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session must be fully taken into account.

Articles 11.1 and 13.1 (a) of the Charter of the United Nations clearly set forth the role of the General Assembly. Those articles highlight the importance of the contribution of its First Committee to the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments, as well as to the promotion of international cooperation in the political field. In this connection, Brazil fully supports the work that is being carried out by the presidency of the General Assembly at its current session.

In that understanding, Brazil has accepted the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have taken the floor to explain my delegation's position on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.15/Rev.1, entitled "Improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee".

Since this was the first time that such a draft resolution had been considered by the First Committee, my delegation dealt with it constructively and made clear its views during the informal consultations. We joined the consensus in the understanding that the issue involved — improving the methods of work of the First Committee — could facilitate the broader effort within the overall process of the General Assembly's revitalization, as is referred to in the third preambular paragraph of the current draft.

I should also affirm once again the important positions that were elaborated by the Non-Aligned Movement during the informal meetings of the First Committee, in which the Non-Aligned Movement emphasized that the First Committee should avoid piecemeal approaches. Furthermore, the aim of the current initiative should be limited to the methods of work. Therefore, any suggestion which may involve the First Committee's actual reform should not be carried out in isolation from the overall process of the General Assembly's revitalization and should comprehensively address issues concerning disarmament machinery.

In our view, the current draft should have been a merely procedural text and should not have touched on the substantive issues. However, it did. In that regard, my delegation would like to express its view that the existing threats to international peace and security referred to in the first preambular paragraph — particularly from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use — must be dealt with as the highest priority. In considering new threats, one should not lose sight of the fact that the doctrine of pre-emptive attack; the lowering of the threshold of the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons; the development of new mini-nuclear weapons; the establishment of exclusive groupings parallel to the United Nations; and the proliferation of the unilateral and lawless use of force, with or without justification — as noted by the Secretary-General in his statement to the General Assembly — are among the most dangerous new threats to international peace and security.

As my delegation stated in the general debate, we welcome any proposal aimed at enhancing the efficiency of United Nations bodies, including the First Committee. In this endeavour, however, the views of all member States must be taken into account and, more importantly, priority should be accorded to the long-sought objective of humanity: nuclear disarmament.

The Chairman: We have thus concluded our consideration of cluster 7 for this meeting and for this session.

We will proceed to take action on the one draft resolution that remains under cluster 10, "International security". That draft resolution is contained in document A/C.1/58/L.26/Rev.1.

A recorded vote has been requested.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will proceed to take action on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.26/Rev.1, entitled "Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation". The draft resolution was introduced at the 14th meeting of the Committee on 23 October by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/58/INF/2.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Bulgaria, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Micronesia (Federated States of), Poland, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine

Draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.26/REV.1 was adopted by 104 votes to 10, with 44 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Haiti informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman: I will now give the floor to those delegations wishing to express themselves in explanation of vote after the vote.

Mr. Stritt (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland should like to clarify its position on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.26/Rev.1, just adopted by the Committee.

My country has always advocated multilateralism in international negotiations and we thank the sponsors of the draft resolution for reaffirming that principle. However, one cannot a priori exclude the bilateral or any other approach that might help to attain common goals in the interests of all. That applies particularly in

the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, as some important bilateral initiatives have highlighted. We therefore consider multilateral, plurilateral, bilateral and other approaches at the national level to be complementary to one another. We feel that the draft resolution on which we have just voted does not sufficiently reflect such an approach.

Moreover, we have some difficulty in accepting certain formulations contained in the draft resolution. I would cite as one example the provision whereby States Members of the United Nations would be requested to refrain from directing unverified non-compliance accusations. In our view, verification is precisely the essential means for determining whether or not accusations are justified. Each State, in principle, should be able to express its doubts concerning non-compliance with international law. Accordingly, Switzerland abstained in the voting on the draft resolution.

Mr. Trezza (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.26/Rev.1, entitled "Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation". The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia; the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey; and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this explanation of vote.

Multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation is a concept to which the EU is fully committed. As stated in the Declaration on Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, adopted by the European Council held in Thessaloniki on 19 and 20 June 2003, the European approach is guided by the commitment to uphold the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements and to support multilateral institutions charged respectively with verification and with upholding compliance with those treaties. Similar concepts are contained in the basic principles for an EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as in the action plan to implement those principles.

Multilateralism is indeed one of the core principles in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to establishing, maintaining and strengthening universal norms and enlarging their scope. Multilateral cooperation is of particular importance in combating new threats of terrorism as well as persisting security threats, in particular the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means. It plays a key role in the implementation of relevant international instruments of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Unfortunately, draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.26/Rev.1 contains a number of elements in both the preambular and the operative paragraphs which the European Union cannot support. As the elements in question are of a serious nature, we have brought to the attention of the sponsors our concerns and views on this subject and have provided suggestions as to how the draft could be improved. While we appreciate that some of our suggestions have been incorporated into the text, we regret that our fundamental concerns have not been taken into account and that the draft resolution retains language that makes it unbalanced.

The European Union believes that unilateral, bilateral and plurilateral actions in disarmament and non-proliferation can bring and have brought positive results. Among other documents, the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons itself recognizes that. Draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.26/Rev.1 does not give sufficient credit to such measures.

It is for those reasons that we are not in a position to support the draft resolution. We remain committed to multilateral approaches in the areas of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and continue to recognize their importance.

Ms. Pollack (Canada): I take the floor to explain Canada's abstention in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.26/Rev.1.

We need, and indeed welcome opportunities here to promote multilateralism in the non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament fields. As we have noted throughout this session of the Committee, Canada believes that strong, legally-binding multilateral treaties, respected and implemented, are indispensable to common security.

We would have been pleased to support the draft resolution. However, despite Canada's firm, long-standing commitment to multilateral principles and

approaches, we could not do so, on account of some specific problematic elements in the draft resolution.

Multilateralism is indeed a core principle in our work; it is not, however, "the" core principle, in the language of the draft resolution (para. 1) and not, as implied in the text, the only fundamental means. Our shared security system is, rather, the sum of many parts, involving a variety of multilateral, plurilateral, regional, bilateral and unilateral measures. All of these are necessary in effective global non-proliferation arms control and disarmament; none is sufficient by itself.

We also have problems with the tone of parts of the draft resolution. Rather than advancing an inclusive vision of multilateralism, it offers an overly rigid, restricted and harmful interpretation that could actually lessen the options available to and required by the global community to address security challenges. That is why we were unable to support draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.26/Rev.1 and instead abstained.

We look forward to working constructively together next year to enhance the role and contribution of multilateralism and to trying to develop a draft resolution that can be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Stephens (Australia): Australia supports effective multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. Collectively, the international community should strengthen multilateral mechanisms to meet the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems as well as by conventional weapons.

Regrettably, however, we had a number of substantial difficulties with draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.26/Rev.1, notably its failure to acknowledge the legitimate role played by plurilateral, regional and national efforts and arrangements to complement multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation. Nor do we see continuous erosion in the field of multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

For those reasons, we abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.26/Rev.1. Australia will continue to play an active role in international efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Gala López (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to reaffirm the importance of preserving multilateralism in international relations. Cuba reaffirms multilateralism as the basic principle of negotiations in the sphere of disarmament and non-proliferation. We also reaffirm multilateralism as the basic principle for resolving worrisome disarmament and non-proliferation issues. My country is aware of the need to continue to move forward in the areas of disarmament, arms regulation and non-proliferation on the basis of universal, multilateral and non-discriminatory negotiations aimed at achieving general and complete disarmament under strict international control.

Cuba believes that multilateral disarmament agreements provide a mechanism whereby States parties can hold consultations among themselves and cooperate in resolving any problem that might arise as to the objectives of such agreements or the implementation of their provisions. Such consultations and cooperation can also be carried out through appropriate international procedures within the framework of the United Nations and in conformity with the Charter. Finally, we agree with others in indicating that the use of unilateral measures by Member States to resolve security issues of concern to them would jeopardize international peace and security and undermine confidence in the international security system as well as the foundations of the United Nations itself.

The Chairman: We have heard the last statement in explanation of vote after the voting. We have thus concluded our consideration of cluster 10.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.